

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY 26 May 2016**, at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

The meeting began at 8.15 p.m., following the Extraordinary meeting of Full Council.

Present:

Parish Councillors: Mr. S. Henton (Chairman)
Mr. M. Allen
Mr. W. Blunden
Mr. R. Pickett
Mr. R. Plass (Vice Chairman)
Mr. S. Shortland

In attendance: Mrs. C. Irwin (Clerk)
Mrs. T. Ely (RFO)

Not present: Parish Councillor Mrs. V. Upton

108. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN.

108.1 The Chairman of Council opened the meeting and called for nominations for the office of Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee. It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and **AGREED** that Councillor Stephen Henton be **ELECTED** as Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee for the Council year 2016/17. Councillor Henton took the Chair.

109. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN.

109.1 It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and **AGREED** that Councillor Ron Plass be **ELECTED** as Vice Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee for 2016/17.

110. APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.

110.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Upton and the reasons were accepted.

111. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

111.1 Grants and donations. Councillor Allen declared a personal interest in item 12 on the Agenda (grant applications from St. Catherine's and St. Peter and St. James Hospices) because of his wife's involvement in fund raising for these establishments.

112. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

112.1 There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

113. MINUTES AND CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 3 MARCH 2016.

113.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 3 March 2016. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes and Confidential Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

114. APPOINTMENT OF SUB COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS.

114.1 It was **AGREED** that the Sub Committees and Working Groups of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and their membership and terms of reference should be as follows:

- Insurance and Risk Management Working Group
4 members – Councillors Allen, Henton, Plass and Shortland

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Remit: to review the insurance policies of the Council in consultation with the Clerk and RFO; to make recommendations to the F&GP Committee on changes to the insurance cover arising from such reviews; to conduct a periodic review of the Council's insurance providers and submit a written comparison of proposals to F&GP with recommendations; to oversee the Council's risk management procedures to ensure that the requirements were met, reporting to F&GP and other committees as appropriate.

- Administration Sub Committee

5 members – Councillors Allen, Blunden, Henton, Plass and Upton.

Remit: to oversee all matters relating to the Parish Council's office property, employment matters and the running and maintenance of the Parish Office within the agreed Administration Budget and in consultation with the Parish Clerk, including periodic checks of the premises and working practices for compliance with Health and Safety and Risk Management requirements.

- Directory Working Group

4 members - Councillors Allen, Henton, Plass and Upton.

Remit: to give practical help to the office staff if needed when preparing the Parish Directory and Year Book for the printers and to consider significant editorial changes in consultation with the office staff. It was suggested that this Working Group should meet at least once a year.

- Grants Panel

3 members - Councillors Allen, Shortland and Upton

Remit: to assess applications for grant funding and make recommendations to the F&GP Committee.

- Public Toilets Working Group

4 members - Councillors Blunden, Plass, Pickett and Upton.

Remit: to liaise with the surveyors and others in developing the project and report to the F&GP Committee.

115. BANK MANDA TE.

- 115.1 There having been no change of Chair or Vice Chairmen of Council or the F&GP Committee, it was **AGREED** that the bank signatories should remain unchanged: Councillors Blunden, Henton, Plass and Upton with the Clerk as signatory, restricted to the purposes of drawing petty cash and communicating with the bank.

116. DIRECT DEBITS AND REGULAR CONTRACTS

- 116.1 The list of payments made by Direct Debit and the regular contracts paid by cheque was **NOTED**.

117. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

- 117.1 There were no Chairman's announcements.

118. ACTION LIST.

- 118.1 Investment of funds (03.03.16) Minute 97.2. Further to discussion on whether to divide the cash deposit between different banks, for security, the Chairman reported that HSBC had confirmed that opening a Communities Account would be quite straightforward. However arrangements would need to be put in place to make transfers between accounts. There followed an exchange of views and opinion was divided on the level of risk in keeping all the money in one bank.

The Chairman **PROPOSED** that the banking arrangements should be left as they were. This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Blunden. It was **NOTED** that the Committee appeared to be evenly divided on this matter and the Chairman stated that he was unwilling for a decision to be made on his casting vote. It was therefore **AGREED** that the matter should be referred to Full Council.

119. GRANTS AND DONATIONS.

119.1 Grant budget. **NOTED:** that the budget for the current financial year was £2,000 and that from the previous year's budget of £2,000 for grants, the total spent had been £1,200.

119.2 Grant request from St Catherine's Hospice. Councillor Allen, having declared a personal interest in this and the next item, as stated at Minute 111.1, remained present.

St. Catherine's Hospice specialised in end of life care to patients with terminal illness, including community-based care in patients' own homes and their services benefitted Lindfield residents.

RESOLVED: that the Council, in accordance with its powers under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, should incur the following expenditure, which, in the opinion of the Council, is in the interests of the area or its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure: a grant of £250 towards the work of St Catherine's Hospice.

119.3 Grant request from St. Peter and St. James Hospice. St. Peter and St. James Hospice also served this area, offering care to people who have a life-limiting illness and approaching the end of life. Their request was for a specific purpose: towards transporting patients to the Wellbeing Centre for outpatient services, many of whom relied on the free volunteer-run transport service.

RESOLVED: that the Council, in accordance with its powers under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, should incur the following expenditure, which, in the opinion of the Council, is in the interests of the area or its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure: a grant of £250 towards the costs of the out-patient transport service to the St Peter and St James Hospice Wellbeing Centre.

119.4 Grant request from Home-Start. Councillor Allen proposed awarding £50 to this organisation which was a local family support charity, dedicated to helping disadvantaged families create a secure and stable environment for their young children. The letter received confirmed that Home-Start was active Lindfield. Councillor Blunden proposed the higher grant of £100, which was **AGREED.**

RESOLVED: that the Council, in accordance with its powers under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, should incur the following expenditure, which, in the opinion of the Council, is in the interests of the area or its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure: a grant of £100 towards the work of Home Start.

119.5 Letters of thanks received. A message of thanks for the grant of £250, agreed at the meeting on 03.03.16, had been received from the Lindfield Arts Festival by email, in which it was confirmed that the Council would be acknowledged in publicity for the 2016 Festival.

120. BUDGET 2015/16.

120.1 The final figures for the 2015/16 financial year were **NOTED:**

Finance and General Purposes Committee. £110,639 has been spent from the budget of £128,020

Analysis of Administration Budget. £99,801 had been spent from the budget of £112,520.

Overall Council Budget. The total amount spent including reserves was £216,172 from £456,840 of which:

- £55,333 had been spent from the E&A budget of £75,400
- £26,250 spent from the Outstanding Project heading for the York paving.
- There had been no expenditure from the £200 budget held by P&T but £493 had been spent from the reserve for professional fees.
- £18,256 had been spent from the Designated Reserves and £5,693 from the General Reserve.

121. BUDGET 2016/17.

121.1 The overall total expenditure to 30.04.16 was £19,628, of which:

- £17,236 had been spent from the F&GP budget of £131,780, including £15,414 from the Administration budget total of £115,780
- £2,300 had been spent from the E&A budget of £51,600
- £91.25 had been spent from the General Reserve.

122. ALLOCATION OF UNSPENT BALANCES AND TRANSFERS TO RESERVES.

122.1 The Chairman stated that a thorough review of the Council's reserves had been carried out the previous year, with the result that the reserves were now fully funded. This would be an annual exercise to be carried out on completion of the year-end figures.

A spreadsheet had been circulated, setting out the calculation for amount available to fund the reserves and recommendations for the amounts to be held as designated reserves. It was **NOTED** that this spreadsheet would also be considered by the E&A Committee on 02.06.16 and a final version would be presented to Full Council for approval on 14 July.

The total amount available to fund the designated reserves was £82,696.67 (not including the standard £50,000 for the General Reserve and the Capital Reserve of £84,170).

It was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Council that:

- the reserves should be approved as stated in the table below, subject to consideration of any amendments proposed by the E&A Committee
- the surplus of £3,452.21 should be added to the General Reserve
- the pre-approval costs associated with the proposed public conveniences on the Common should continue to be paid from the General Reserve rather than creating a designated reserve for this purpose.

Designated Reserves			Total not to exceed £82,696.96	
	£	£		£
Capital Project: Repairs and remedial work to Clock Tower Hous	7,500.00	5,263.33	Retain balance	2,236.67
Street Map of Lindfield	4,000.00	-	Retain	4,000.00
Posts around Open Spaces	4,000.00	-	Retain	4,000.00
Emergency Equipment (to include purchase of salt bins)	500.00	-	Retain	500.00
Joint Project with WSCC: Dropped kerbs	5,500.00	-	Increased by £7,000 from 2015/16 in-year budget	12,500.00
Denmans Lane toilets - maintenance sinking fund	1,000.00	-	Retain	1,000.00
Repair/maintenance of community assets - sinking fund	3,000.00	-	Retain	3,000.00
Maintenance of King Edward Hall clock	500.00	-	Retain	500.00
Litter bins	-	-	NEW RESERVE 2016/17 £2,000 carried down from 2015/16 in-year budget	2,000.00
Upgrade of Hickmans Lane Playground	10,000.00	-	Increased by £5,000 from 2015/16 in-year budget	15,000.00
Professional Fees/Neighbourhood Plan	15,000.00	492.88	Retain balance	14,507.12
Traffic Study	20,000.00	-	Retain	20,000.00
Total	71,000.00	5,756.21		79,243.79
			Available funds	82,696.00
			Deduct designated reserves	79,243.79
			SURPLUS £	3,452.21

122.2 In response to a question from a Member about whether the capital receipt from the sale of the Denmans Lane office could be spent on the upgrade of the Hickmans Lane playground, it was suggested that this could be discussed if the public conveniences project was not progressed.

123. ACTIONS ARISING FROM COUNCIL'S CONSIDERATION OF THE REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT AND INTERNAL CONTROL PROCEDURES.

123.1 At the meeting of Full Council which had immediately preceded this F&GP meeting, the actions from the review carried out by Councillor Plass had been referred to the F&GP Committee. As stated in Councillor Plass' report these actions were as follows:

- To undertake a review of Internal Auditors, to ensure that the current provision is adequate for the Council's needs and cost effective.
- To undertake a review of existing accounting procedures to ensure that accounting is being carried out in the most efficient and up-to-date way
- To carry out further work on Risk Assessment, aiming to deliver during the current year.

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Councillor Plass clarified that he was suggesting a review of the internal audit system and not that the Council should consider changing its Internal Auditor. The Clerk / RFO were not therefore required to obtain quotations from other auditors.

It was **AGREED**:

- that Councillors Henton and Plass should carry out a review of the internal audit and existing accounting procedures for the next F&GP meeting
- that the Insurance and Risk Management Working Group should meet to address the matters relating to Risk Assessment.

124. PARISH OFFICE: PHOTOCOPIER.

124.1 The Clerk gave a verbal report. The minimum term for the current photocopier was due to expire on 4 October and the Council was required to give 90 days' notice to cancel the contract. Quotations had been received from the current supplier to renew the lease on the existing equipment, which was in good working order, for a further term and from two other suppliers for new copiers. The choice of model, in terms of size, was limited by the restricted access to the office from the corridor. Because more time was needed to compare quotations and the terms and conditions on a like-for-like basis, it was **AGREED** to delegate the decision to the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman of the F&GP Committee.

125. ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING AND CONFERENCE EVENTS.

125.1 It was **NOTED** that the RFO had booked to attend the SSALC Legal and Finance Day on 14 July.

126. RISK MANAGEMENT.

126.1 This had been covered under the item minuted as 123.1 above.

127. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME TO NOTE AND CONSIDER LETTER FROM CAPITA PENSIONS REGARDING EMPLOYER DISCRETIONS.

127.1 It was **NOTED** that there had not been sufficient time to study the information and prepare a report. It would therefore be an agenda item for the next meeting of Full Council on 14 July, in order to meet the deadline of 31 August.

128. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

128.1 New Pay Scales. After publication of the agenda for this meeting, notification, issued jointly by NALC and the SLCC, had been received that the NJC had reached agreement on new pay scales for staff employed under the terms of the model contract - 1% backdated to 1 April and a further 1% to apply from 1 April 2017. This would add £470 over the year to the expenditure on salaries and approximately £100 to the Council's Employer Pension Contributions which for this year were 21.7% of salary. The new pay scales were **NOTED** and **ACCEPTED**.

128.2 Administration Sub Committee. Councillor Blunden requested that a meeting of the Administration Sub Committee should be arranged as soon as possible and suggested Wednesdays.

The meeting concluded at 8.52 p.m.